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DOES WATCHING STRIPPERS MAKE ME MORE LIKELY TO BE A VICTIM OF CRIME?

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In Fort Wayne, Indiana, in the spring of 2001, a heated debate between the American Family Association (AFA), local business owners, and city officials has arisen regarding how to regulate sex-oriented businesses, particularly gentlemen's clubs. One of the key tenets of the AFA argument is that gentlemen's clubs have higher rates of crime than other clubs without exotic dancers. The purpose of this study is to examine the validity of that claim; in other words, do gentlemen's clubs actually have higher crime rates than other taverns in the city? Using calls for service as the unit of analysis, we compare the number of police calls for service to gentlemen's clubs with the number of police calls for service to a sample of other bars proximate to the gentlemen's clubs. Preliminary analysis reveals that, with a few notable exceptions, there are few statistically significant differences between calls for service to the clubs in question. We suggest that this finding is due to the high cover charges and relatively expensive drinks, creating low alcohol availability and fewer intoxicated patrons in the gentlemen's clubs. Implications and avenues for future research are also discussed.